

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10 JUSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2139

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR MY

SUBJ: NARCOTICS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 7294

1. JAN 3 EDITION OF GOM-INFLUENCED NEW STRAITS TIMES (NST) REPORTED UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA (USM) CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH SURVEY WHICH DISCLOSED THAT ABOUT TEN PERCENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COUNTRY HAVE TRIED DRUGS. RESULTS OF SURVEY PUBLICIZED IN COURSE OF USM BRIEFING OF LAW MINISTER AND ATTORNEY GENERAL TAN SRI ABDUL KADIR.

2. SAME EDITION OF NST CARRIED EDITORIAL TITLED "WAKE UP -- NOW" WHICH CITES SURVEY, NOTES THAT TREND IN DRUG USE IN MALAYSIA HAS BEEN UPWARD IN RECENT YEARS AND EXHORTS: "THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE PUBLIC TO FULLY WAKE UP TO A SOCIAL EVIL WHICH THREATENS TO DESTROY MALAYSIA'S YOUTH AND MALAYSIA'S FUTURE." REGARDING EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH DRUG ABUSE, EDITORIAL POINTS OUT "THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACTED FIRMLY AS FAR AS LEGISLATION IS CONCERNED. BUT THERE MUST BE A TOTAL SOCIETAL ATTACK IN EVERY FIELD BY EVERYONE... DRUG ADDICTION IS POTENTIALLY A LARGE-SCALE CONTAGIOUS DISEASE THREATENING UNLIMITED DEVASTATION. THERE IS EVERY JUSTIFICATION FOR A NATIONAL STRATEGY OF OVERKILL, TO

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DESTROY IT BEFORE WE ARE DESTROYED."

3. COMMENT: THIS COVERAGE OF MALAYSIAN DRUG SCENE IS
TYPICAL OF GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED PRESS PLAY OF ISSUE IN
RECENT MONTHS. (SEE ALSO REFTEL.) EMBASSY FEELS THERE
IS NO QUESTION GOM IS AWARE OF INTERNAL DRUG PROBLEM AND
IS COMMITTED TO DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT; THEY DO NOT VIEW
DRUG ABUSE AS MERELY AN AMERICAN PROBLEM. WE JUDGE THEIR
ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS TO BE RELATIVELY EFFECTIVE GIVEN THE
SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM. IT IS IN THE PREVENTION, TREATMENT
AND REHABILITATION AREAS THAT GOM IS ONLY BEGINNING TO SEE
A NEED FOR ACTION. THE EDITORIAL OUTLINED ABOVE IS A SIGN
THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT MOVING ON THESE FRONTS, BUT
WEAKNESS IN RESPONSIBLE MINISTRIES (PARTICULARLY SOCIAL
WELFARE) HAS IMPEDED PROGRESS.
UNDERHILL

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